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State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

For Immediate Release:
September 16, 2009

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Governor Joins HHS Secretary Sebelius at White House Announce National Medical Home Initiative Patterned on Vermont Blueprint for Health

Washington, DC – Governor Jim Douglas and Blueprint for Health Director Craig Jones, M.D., joined Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius at the White House today for the announcement of a new federal initiative modeled after Vermont’s innovative Blueprint for Health. The announcement could have positive financial implications for Vermont, as it will enable Medicare to join Medicaid and commercial insurance carriers in state multi-insurer efforts to support primary care medical homes and community health teams.

“When Medicare, Medicaid, and the private sector work together, physicians will face consistent incentives to change their practices to enhance their ability to promote prevention and wellness, utilize existing information technologies, and coordinate care across multiple parts of the health care system,” explained Secretary Sebelius. “Governor Douglas, like many others, has recognized that when primary care is improved and care is coordinated, the overall quality is increased and costs are lowered.”

Vermont’s Blueprint Integrated Pilots currently include all major Vermont insurers, with the exception of Medicare. “This is a tremendous opportunity,” explained Governor Douglas. “With Medicare participation, we would have the option to expand the

Blueprint beyond the current pilot phase, enhancing the delivery system reform we started here in 2006.”

The Blueprint has developed an advanced model of primary care and prevention that includes health teams that provide coordinated services through multiple primary care practices in a community, as well as enhanced fees for primary care based on performance and outcomes.

“A lot of Vermont’s delivery system reform is about common sense connecting of the dots,” said Governor Douglas at the White House. “For many of us, a visit to our family practice physician or internist takes place in one silo, while visits to specialists and even hospital procedures happen in another. The primary care medical home, connected by health information technology to the specialists, labs, and hospitals we visit, means your personal doctor gets automatic updates on your care, test results, and medication prescriptions, whenever and wherever those services are delivered. Duplicative – and by extension unnecessarily costly – lab tests are eliminated, and potentially adverse medication interactions are flagged immediately. Your primary care doctor is given the information he or she needs to be at the center of your care team, ensuring coordination that will lead to better quality and outcomes.”

Douglas added: “It is a tribute to all of our partners –Vermont’s Congressional delegation, commercial insurance carriers, legislators, and the Vermont medical community – [especialy](#) the leadership of Dr. Jones that we now see the Blueprint’s innovations recognized as a national model for delivery system reform.”

Under the demonstration program, states that meet specified criteria will be provided an opportunity to add Medicare’s support to their efforts to enhance primary care. Applications will be solicited later this fall for Medicare participation that is slated to begin early next year. Vermont, while it will have to apply to be included in the demonstration program, is extremely well-positioned to be included in the effort.

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